

Fall 2011

Janine DeLaunay's testimony of camp

This past week I spent time at Suttle Lake at the Transformation Prayer Retreat. About seventeen of us from 49 to 83 sang, prayed, hiked, and broke bread together. It was a marvelous time of fellowship and renewal, and I appreciated the time away. Our camp and retreat ministry offers amazing and varied programs for all ages throughout much of the year, and I encourage you to find out about all the opportunities available.

As I reflect back on this past week, I'm amazed at the countless ways I experienced God's presence. One of the confirmations I experienced was the importance and power of being in community. Even when we were involved in different activities—the jigsaw puzzle group, those reading or drawing, a couple folks playing the guitar and singing, and others just listening, the sense of community was strong. We hiked, too, in community—some went ahead, and some took the hikes at a more measured pace. Yet we were aware of each other's needs and made sure all who wanted to could participate. For me to participate on some of the more difficult hikes, several people provided assistance. Michael led the way and we were connected by a hiking stick held horizontally between us. This gave me support and put enough distance between us so that I was not stepping on his heels. On the most rocky and rooted parts of the trail, Kathleen would steady me from alongside. Others provided commentary about the amazing scenery as we hiked in different terrains. It reminded me that we are indeed the body of Christ together, each offering our unique gifts, each experiencing God in unique ways, yet our collective experience enhanced by the presence and contributions of one another.

As we move into the fall season, with its varied demands on our time and energy, my prayer is that we recommit ourselves to be in worship together. As we gather to lift our voices in song and prayer, and to name our joys and concerns before one another, the proclamation of the good news of God with us will strengthen and encourage us. Then, as we are sent out and scattered into the world as the body of Christ, renewed in the Spirit, we will be better equipped to see the Christ in, and be the Christ to those around us.

Lord, thank you for all the ways in which you renew us, from the wonder and beauty of your creation, to your presence experienced through caring friends and hospitable strangers. Keep us alert to all the ways in which you work in and through all people. Help us act upon those spirit nudges you send, that we might be Christ's presence for those we encounter in our day to day lives.

*Rev. Janine*

*"The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of Love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered Fire!"*

*Pierre de Chardin*